DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 230 131 HE 016 195

TITLE	Preparing for the Undergraduate Core Curriculum.
INSTITUTION	Houston Univ., Tex.
PUB DATE	[82]
NOTE	11p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Basic Skills; *Core Curriculum; Cultural Background; Degree Requirements; Educational Objectives; English Curriculum; Higher Education; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Mathematics Curriculum; Natural Sciences; Social Sciences; *Undergraduate Study
IDENTIFIERS	*University of Houston TX

ABSTRACT

The undergraduate core curriculum at the University of Houston is discussed. Attention is directed to procedures for submitting course proposals; guidelines for basic skills courses; placement examinations; criteria for the knowledge base level of the core curriculum; criteria for core courses in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and cultural heritage; criteria for state-mandated courses; and criteria for knowledge integration courses. Courses required for the the basic skills level of the core curriculum (English/writing and mathematics/reasoning) are identified. Basic objectives for the knowledge base level of the core curriculum (natural science, social science, and cultural heritage) are indicated, along with specific objectives for each study area. The knowledge integration part of the curriculum is described as a means to provide juniors and seniors with experience in analyzing, criticizing, and relating ideas from more than one discipline. It is noted that the knowledge integration requirement may be satisfied by one of the following options: completing pairs of courses designed by two or more departments and/or colleges, taking knowledge integration courses, or completing a minor program in a department other than the major. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED230131

PREPARING FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE CORE CURRICULUM

The undergraduate core curriculum approved by Provost Magner in January 1982 will take effect in fall 1983. The core curriculum shall apply to students entering in fall 1983 and subsequent semesters except those who were previously enrolled continuously during regular semesters at any college or university prior to fall 1983. All students transferring to the Central Campus in fall 1985 and subsequent semesters must meet the requirements of the core curriculum. These requirements have been summarized on page 12.

All courses except those specifically designated by the Task Force on Undergraduate Education and those required by State law must be approved by the Core Advisory Committee to be included in the core curriculum. The following courses were designated by the Task Force on Undergraduate Education as core courses at the basic skills level: English 1303, English 1304, and Mathematics 1310. Students majoring in the College of Technology may satisfy the Mathematics 1310 requirement by successful completion of Technical Mathematics 1335. Courses which departments propose as equivalents to the designated courses must be submitted to the Core Advisory Committee for approval.

PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING COURSES

All departments should submit to the Office of the Provost existing courses which clearly meet core curriculum criteria (see below). Existing courses which have been modified to meet core curriculum criteria and new courses which have been designed to meet core curriculum requirements must first be submitted to the Undergraduate Council and then to the Office of the Provost. The Core Advisory Committee (CAC) will review the courses to deter-

HE016195

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Linda A. Houston

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

mine whether they meet the objectives outlined for the level of the core for which they are being proposed: Level 1, Basic Skills; Level 2, Knowledge Base and Advanced Skills; or Level 3, Knowledge Integration. Below are brief descriptions of the criteria for courses for each level of the core curriculum and other general information which will be used in making these decisions. No course proposed for inclusion in the core curriculum will be reviewed by the CAC until it has been approved by the Undergraduate Council for inclusion in the course inventory.

After perusing these criteria, departments should fill out and submit the Request Form for Consideration of a Course for the Undergraduate Core Curriculum along with appropriate documentation (see attached form) to the Office of the Provost.

Each course will be reviewed by a subcommittee which will make recommendations to the CAC. If a course does not meet core curriculum requirements, the department submitting the course will be notified. Disapproved courses may be reconsidered after revisions have been made. Faculty may also request an opportunity to speak in behalf of a course. Members of the CAC will offer assistance to departments wishing to develop new courses to be considered for the core.

The following are the chairs of the subcommittees:

Basic Skills	Garret Etgen
Natural Sciences	Douglas Dyckes
Social Sciences	Russell Reid
Cultural Heritage	Bredo Johnsen
State-mandated	Robert Haynes
Knowledge Integration	Paul Seaford

Robert Haynes, Deputy Provost, will answer general questions regarding core curriculum requirements.

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING COURSES TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE CORE CURRICULUM

LEVEL 1

CRITERIA FOR BASIC SKILLS COURSES

The basic skills level of the core curriculum involves two specific components: English/writing and Mathematics/reasoning. The purpose of the basic skills level is to insure that students master the skills that are required to read and comprehend a variety of college-level materials; to write in a manner that is clear, organized and grammatically correct; and to use and apply basic arithmetic and algebraic concepts.

I. English/writing. This component of the Basic Skills level requires satisfactory completion of twelve semester hours, including:

A. English 1303-1304*

B. Six semester hours from 2000-level English courses.

Note: Other courses in English at a higher level or courses from other disciplines may be eligible for core credit under B provided they satisfy the following criteria:

1. have English 1303-1304 as prerequisites;
2. sustain the training and practice in writing initiated in English 1303-1304;
3. emphasize careful, critical reading and skillful writing.

II. Mathematics/reasoning. This component of the basic skills level requires satisfactory completion of six semester hours, including:

A. Mathematics 1310*

B. Three semester hours in mathematics/reasoning.

*Credit for these courses may be obtained through the credit-by-examination program. See pp. 26-27 of the 1982-83 General Information Bulletin.

Note: To be eligible for core credit in this component a course must satisfy the following criteria:

1. have Mathematics 1310 as a prerequisite;
2. develop analytical thinking skills;
3. prepare students for those core or other courses that require a knowledge base in mathematics/reasoning.

Placement Examinations. The following students will be required to take English and/or mathematics placement-without-credit examinations to determine their proper placement in the sequences of basic skills courses required in the core curriculum: (1) all entering freshmen; (2) transfer students who have not completed the twelve hours of required English/writing courses or their equivalents, and college algebra or its equivalent; (3) those re-enrolling after a continuous absence of one calendar year; and (4) those who interrupted progress toward a degree for one regular semester before completing the required twelve hours of English/ writing or their equivalents and college algebra or its equivalent.

Based upon their English placement examination, students will be placed in one of the following:

1. Remedial English (English 1300);
2. English 1303;
3. English 1304;
4. 2000-level English.

Students who are placed in English 1304 and who wish to receive credit for English 1303 may do so either by passing English 1303 or by passing the English placement-with-credit examination; students who place into 2000-level English have the corresponding options for either or both of English 1303 and English 1304. All students must receive six hours credit in approved courses

at or above the 2000-level in the English/writing component. Since literature is the primary vehicle through which the objectives of the sophomore level English requirement are to be realized, all students must receive credit for at least one three-hour literature course.

Based upon their mathematics placement examination, students will be placed in one of the following:

1. Remedial mathematics;
2. Mathematics 1310;
3. An approved mathematics/reasoning course having Mathematics 1310 as a prerequisite.

Students who are placed in an approved mathematics/reasoning course having Mathematics 1310 as a prerequisite and who wish to receive credit for Mathematics 1310 may do so either by passing Mathematics 1310 or by passing the CLEP College Algebra examination. All students must receive three hours credit above Mathematics 1310 in the mathematics/reasoning component.

LEVEL 2

CRITERIA FOR KNOWLEDGE BASE COURSES

The knowledge base level of the core curriculum includes natural science, social science, and cultural heritage courses. There are two principal objectives of all knowledge base courses. The first of these is to provide opportunities for students to acquire a knowledge base in natural science, social science, or the cultural heritage of our society. The second objective is to continue the development of general intellectual skills commenced at level 1.

Acceptable courses for this level should therefore:

1. provide knowledge of both the substance and the procedures of a recognized discipline;

2. place demands on students which will insure that the general intellectual skills relevant to that discipline are developed to a significant degree.

CRITERIA FOR CORE COURSES IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES

Courses to be accepted for the core curriculum in the natural sciences will normally be those introductory courses in biology, chemistry, geology, or physics acceptable for degree credit for students who major in the natural sciences, if they:

1. provide a general understanding of the methods and logic of inquiry in that science;
2. employ and develop mathematical or other forms of analysis appropriate to the discipline;
3. have completion of or concurrent enrollment in Mathematics 1310 as a prerequisite.

Advanced courses which have such introductory courses as prerequisites and meet the general knowledge and mathematics-based criteria of core courses in natural science may also be approved.

Departments of natural science may wish to propose additional courses specifically designed for the core curriculum which are not acceptable for degree credit within the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. In the rationale which accompanies the request form, departments must justify proposing these courses for the core when they are not acceptable for degree credit within the College.

CRITERIA FOR CORE COURSES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Courses to be accepted for the core curriculum in the social sciences will include introductions to the disciplines of anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology or to their subdisciplines, if they:

1. provide general knowledge of the theory, substance, and discovery procedures of the discipline or subdiscipline;
2. are applicable to a major in that field;
3. serve as a prerequisite to more advanced courses in that field;
4. have as a prerequisite concurrent enrollment in or completion of English 1303 (or Math 1310, if more appropriate);
5. continue the development of verbal and/or mathematical reasoning skills and require written work.

Advanced courses may be approved for inclusion in the core as long as they conform to the general education intentions of this requirement and have an introductory social science core course as a prerequisite.

CRITERIA FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE COURSES

Courses to be accepted for the core curriculum cultural heritage requirement will be chosen from the following disciplines: art, drama, foreign languages, history, literature, music, and philosophy, if they:

1. emphasize those great works and achievements of Western civilization which form the principal cultural heritage of this nation;
2. are acceptable for a major in the discipline they represent;
3. have as a prerequisite concurrent enrollment in or satisfactory completion of English 1303;

4. continue the development of verbal reasoning skills and require written work.

Note: 1. Performance courses are not acceptable for the core curriculum.

2. Courses in foreign literature in translation may be approved for the core curriculum as long as they meet criteria 1, 3, and 4 above.

CRITERIA FOR STATE-MANDATED COURSES

Senate Bill 254 provides that no person may receive an undergraduate degree without credit for six semester hours in American history and six semester hours in the constitutions of the United States and Texas. These requirements may be satisfied by History 2301 and 2302 and by Political Science 2333 and 2334, respectively. Three hours of each six hour requirement may be satisfied by advanced placement or advanced standing examination.* State law permits the substitution of three semester credit hours of Texas history (History 2341 or History 2343) for three of the six semester credit hours of the American history requirement.

Appropriate equivalents approved by the Core Advisory Committee may be used to satisfy the American history and constitutions of the United States and Texas requirements. It is expected that State-mandated courses and their equivalents will meet the objectives and criteria for courses included in the core curriculum by continuing the development of reasoning skills and by requiring written work.

For further information, consult page 78 of the 1982-83 General Information Bulletin.

*See p. 27 of the 1982-83 General Information Bulletin.

LEVEL 3

CRITERIA FOR KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION COURSES

Undergraduate education is frequently compartmentalized or fragmented. Often students are unable to deal with ideas outside their major discipline, or even to relate ideas from their own discipline to other subject matter. To overcome this problem, the knowledge integration component of the core will provide students at the junior and senior levels with experience in analyzing, criticizing, and relating ideas from more than one discipline. This part of the core will be taken only after students have adequate preparation in the form of prerequisites representing at least two areas of substantive knowledge.

Knowledge integration can take a great variety of forms, but the essence is that two or more academic disciplines are put into juxtaposition with one another to enable the separate bodies of knowledge and the methodologies associated with them to be compared, analyzed, or criticized within problem-oriented and/or theory-oriented contexts. The knowledge integration requirement may be satisfied by taking at least six hours in residence at the senior level in options 1 or 2 or by the minor described in option 3:

OPTION 1, Concurrent Enrollment Courses (6 Hours)

Pairs of courses designed by two or more departments and/or colleges to meet the knowledge integration requirement may be submitted to the Core Advisory Committee for approval. These courses must have prerequisites providing a basic understanding of the disciplines involved. The instructional processes should be directed toward integrating knowledge from the disciplines represented.

OPTION 2, Knowledge Integration Courses (6 Hours)

Certain courses will be identified or developed specifically for the core which bring together two or more disciplines in the manner described above. These may be taught by an instructor who is approved by the departments whose disciplines are represented or they may be team-taught by representatives of two or more disciplines. These courses will be reviewed for approval by the appropriate college curriculum committee(s) and the Core Advisory Committee.

OPTION 3, A Minor Program (15 Hours)

Completion of a minor program in a department other than the major will fulfill this core requirement. The requirements for a minor will be determined by the minor department, but must consist of at least fifteen hours in a particular discipline, nine of which are in courses at the 3000 level or above.

20 X10